



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

National Transportation Safety Board

★ Hard Core Drinking Drivers

Get habitual drinking drivers off the nation's highways

The grim facts:

- One alcohol-impaired driving fatality occurs about every 45 minutes.
- 10,839 people died in the United States from alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2009.
- In 2009, people identified as "hard core drinking drivers" – those with high blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels of 0.15 percent or greater or who are repeat offenders with a drunk driving arrest or conviction in the past 10 years – were involved in more than 70 percent of the alcohol-impaired driving fatalities and more than 22 percent of the total highway deaths.
- Between 1982 and 2009, more than 251,000 people died in crashes involving hard core drinking drivers.
- Repeat offenders represent about one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of driving while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol.

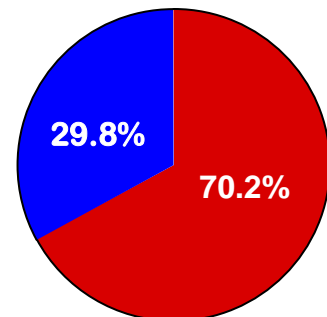
10,839 Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatalities in 2009



Hard core fatalities: 7,607



Other alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities



Effective actions to curb hard core drinking drivers:

The elements in the National Transportation Safety Board's model for an effective anti-drinking and driving program save lives. These elements are:

- Conduct frequent and statewide sobriety checkpoints.
- Implement programs for identifying individuals who drive on a suspended or revoked license.
- Define a repeat offender as anyone arrested of a DWI offense within 10 years of a prior arrest for DWI. One DWI arrest is indicative of a substance abuse problem.
- Impose tougher penalties, assessment and treatment for DWI offenders arrested with a BAC level of 0.15 percent or higher. The estimated relative fatality risk of drivers in single-vehicle crashes with a high BAC is 385 times that of a zero BAC driver.

- Use administrative license revocation, which reduces involvement of adult drivers in fatal crashes by 13 percent to 19 percent.
- Prohibit plea-bargaining. Alternatively, require that the original alcohol-related charge be listed in court and motor vehicle licensing records.
- Prohibit diversion programs. Diverted offenders repeat their offense faster and often receive multiple diversions, despite legislated limits on the use of this measure.
- Establish individualized court-based sanction programs, such as DWI courts, with frequent offender contact, unannounced testing, mandatory assessment, treatment, and long-term follow-up.
- Use vehicle sanctions, such as license plate impoundment, ignition interlock devices, vehicle immobilization, vehicle impoundment, and vehicle forfeiture.
- Implement alternatives to jail confinement such as home detention with electronic monitoring; intensive supervision probation; or jail-treatment facilities, especially for multiple DWI offenders.
- Require DWI offenders to maintain a zero BAC level. Such measures have resulted in a 25 percent reduction in the proportion of repeat offenders involved in fatal crashes.

Need more information?

- Visit the NTSB website: www.nts.gov